MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 8, 2010

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Lew C. Bauman
County Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: County Administrative Officer's Report for the week of September 7, 2010

This is the weekly report by the County Administrative Officer.

This Week's Topics: Monterey County kicks off National Preparedness Month with an evacuation drill at the Health Department, the County Libraries role in local literacy programs is featured on National Public Radio and news from Elections.

Office of Emergency Services
September is National Preparedness Month, and in Monterey County, the Office of Emergency Services is reminding the community that preparedness is everyone's responsibility. OES is partnering with the Citizen's Corps Council of Monterey County for a combined plan to reach out to individuals, families, neighborhoods, schools, business owners and employees, community organizations and local governments to become better prepared for emergencies. For more information and materials about preparedness, check out the OES webpage http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/oes/ or http://www.in.co.monterey.ca.us/oes/

Health
As part of National Preparedness Month activities, OES planned an evacuation exercise for the Monterey County Health Department, which was held Tuesday, September 7th. This is the first functional exercise held in the new Health Department Headquarters.
Those driving along Natividad Road during the drill may have wondered why employees were out in the parking lot for an hour. Perhaps it was a little inconvenient, but new Health Department Director Ray Bullick says that could turn out to be a public relations bonus.

"During September we encourage people to take steps for planning and practicing for disasters" says Bullick. "This exercise is a chance for the Health Department and our community partners to set a good example for other organizations."

The exercise, "Mass Exigence" provided an opportunity for the Health Department, Monterey County Office of Emergency Services, Monterey County 911, Salinas Police and the Salinas Fire Department to practice a response to an incident at the Health Department.

The exercise tested the readiness of the staff overall, but had a definite focus on the department’s Public Health Laboratory response plan. The Centers for Disease Control require regular testing for such facilities.

The drill scenario was a fire in the lab. Part of the drill required the lab to be under evacuation orders so staff could practice the steps for handling sensitive materials.

Libraries
Monterey County’s Literacy Campaign was highlighted by Garrison Keillor on National Public Radio on the Writer’s Almanac show on Wednesday, September 8th, in honor of International Literacy Day, when people around the world recognize the importance of literacy. Locally, the entire week of September 8–14 is ‘Monterey County Literacy Week’ as declared by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors in 2007. The Monterey County Free Libraries system (MCFL) held a community open house in Seaside in honor of the occasion on September 7th. MCFL is also a key player in the Literacy Campaign which is spearheaded by the Community Foundation for Monterey County and has offered an adult literacy program -- now called “READ with Monterey County free Libraries”-- since the mid 1980’s.
READ with MCFL currently has 70 tutors working with 75 learners; nearly 50 more learners are on the waiting list. Because the need for tutors exceeds the supply, learners must often wait more than 3 months to be matched with a tutor. “Tutors often come to our program because they want to make a difference in the community,” reports Literacy Program Specialist Cathy Andrews. “Their impact reaches beyond the learner they assist,” she says, “and touches the learner’s family and acquaintances. It can be life-changing for the learners.”

Reading a utility bill, menu, or labels on medicines is a challenge for 25% of Monterey County adults. Literacy is the key to opportunities. It also creates a powerful workforce in a community. We need help from businesses, community organizations, and volunteers to create a healthy, literate community. To help someone join the reading program, to volunteer to be a reading tutor, to become a donor, or to learn more about READ with Monterey County Free Libraries, contact Cathy Andrews, Literacy Program Specialist, at AndrewsCS@co.monterey.ca.us or call 831-883-7597

Elections

November 2, 2010 Statewide Consolidated General Election: The November General election is 56 days away. The Department is now working on the design and layout of the myriad of ballot types and voter information pamphlets covering the County and the 31 local candidate contests and eight ballot measures, in addition to statewide contests and propositions. Visit the Department’s website to find local contest information and a link to the Secretary of State’s website for all statewide ballot information.

The Department will soon be sending the email commencing the recruitment of county employees to participate in the County’s Election Official Program for the coming election. Also, as a reminder to those employees who are parents with students in high school, we will also be sending along the information for the Student Poll Worker Program to supplement voter assistance on Election Day and provide an opportunity for students to see Democracy in action!

Outreach: At the last meeting with members of the Observer Panel, the small group discussed a recent voter letter in The Herald about the design and layout of the voter information portion of the local Pamphlet in relation to plans to make minor modifications prior to the November 2010 election. Two members of the Panel gathered designs from other county election offices in addition to information regarding information and layout the Department is mandated to use, held a separate meeting to come up with a modified design for the cover, a new “table of contents” page, and simplification of certain instructions and “filler” pages. It is hoped that the minor changes to the cover and general information contained will make the Pamphlet more “user friendly” and easier to read.

Look for the Department’s Outreach team this weekend registering voters and recruiting new poll workers at the Salinas El Grito Festival!!

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